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Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

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MEETING MINUTES
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: April 12, 2022

Time: 11:00AM-1:00PM

Microsoft Teams Virtual Location: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only) [857-327-9245](tel:857-327-9245) **Phone Conference ID:** 340 146 417#

Agenda Items:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Peck at 11:04am.

		Video/ Call	Absent	Meeting Minutes
1	Chair-Andrew Peck	X		Yes
2	Scott Taberner*	X		Not present to vote
3	Rep. Sean Garballey		X	
4	Sen. James Eldridge**	X		Yes
5	DA Marian Ryan**	X		Yes
6	Allison S. Cartwright**	X		Yes
7	Lorna Spencer		X	
8	Ret. Chief Fred Ryan		X	
9	Diane Coffey	X		Abstain
10	Jennifer Kakley	X		Yes
11	Judge Rosemary Mineham		X	
12	Kara Hayes	X		Yes
13	Carolyn Boyes- Watson	X		Yes
14	Erin Freeborn***	X		Yes
15	Dennis D. Evertt Jr.		X	
16	Susan Jeghelian	X		Yes
17	Vacant			

*Joined at 11:30

**Leaving at 12:00pm

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EOPSS Staff: Arielle Mullaney, Amy Putvinskas and Anjeza Xhemollari

Others in attendance: Over 10 members of the public attend the open meeting.

2. Welcome

Chairman Andrew Peck welcomed all committee members and attendance was taken.

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 8, 2022

Kara Hayes made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, the motion was second by Senator Eldridge. Roll call was taken to approve the draft meeting minutes. Diane Coffey abstained. Motion carried.

4. RFP, funding, and next steps

Chair Peck- We need to discuss funding for the inventory. One way we could do which would be easier would be to work with local state institution, potentially do an ISA with that institution. State agencies move money back and forth. Second way is to put out the full RFP. That could take 4-6 months and opens it up to any higher ed institution. Thoughts?

Susan- Can you clarify you the process of colleges and universities for that option. Would it be put out as an RFP to the universities?

Chair Peck- If it's an ISA. We could collectively identify them as a group.

Susan- Does the money have a limitation of when it needs to be spent?

Chair Peck- I believe it comes out of ARPA money. It can be used until 2027.

Senator- Some funding is state and some funding is federal. State money has to be spent within the year.

Carolyn- Can you explain the purpose of the inventory- What is it for?

Senator Eldridge- It's an inventory for the RJAC executive branch and legislative branch.

Carolyn- It should align with the mission the committee came up with. The inventory should be targeted broadly where RJAC is being used across the state.

Kara Hayes-does that include three branches in the inventory.

Senator- Yes, all three branches are included in the inventory.

Erin- What does the process look like for the number and options of partners?

Chair Peck- Depends on who has the capacity to do it and the whole committee to weigh in and decide which institution gets it and we choose to work with. Need to outreach to the institutions.

Erin- Thank you. I think the process needs committee work to bring options back to the larger committee.

Chair Peck- Can the subcommittee do that work on the RFP?

Kara Hayes- Subcommittee hasn't met in while.

Anjeza- Members of the RFP Subcommittee include. Chair-Becky Michaels, Scott Taberner, Carolyn Boyes-Watson, Rep. Sean Garballey, and former members Cheis Garrus and Strong Oak.

Chair Peck- I am happy to jump in and take the lead for a subcommittee to explore the needs around state institution approach.

Susan- I work at UMass Boston so I should not be involved in deciding that.

Chair Peck- Okay makes sense. No decision needs to be made today. We need to look at the two different pathways to take. If no other comments or concerns, we have a short agenda. Moving on to agenda number 5.

5. Public Comment (10 minutes)

Susan Maze-Rothstein- Did Strong Oak attending today's meeting? My understanding is that Strong Oak did not submit a resignation letter and did not receive a link for today's meeting. The issues that Strong Oak raised was the use of information on community-based organizations. I'm confused on this it doesn't seem to me that the issues of trust raised was not addressed or talked about. I'm confused why Strong Oak did not receive a link for today's meeting.

Anjeza- Everyone has the link on their calendar, you can also find the meeting link online.

Kara Hayes- It's on a rolling calendar invite from EOPSS. It allows a one click entry into the meeting. There is also the public access link she can find.

Susan Maze-Rothstein- Why did she not receive an email, and there is an issue of trust. Committed to restorative justice for the commonwealth.

Carolyn- May I say something at this point. I feel like there was many issues that were raised by Strong Oak in our last meeting, that I would like to keep discussing as a committee, separately from the inventory. I think it is about what our aspiration is for the committee that we discuss apart and in addition how we advocate for RJAC. We should discuss what we can do going forward to address the concerns. I would like to continue it for the next agenda meeting. Increase the ability for support across communities. We should pursue that as a discussion on this committee. Honor the concerns raised by Strong Oak.

Brenda Nolan- I am afraid that I threw both Strong Oak and restorative justice under the bus by not speaking about my own experiences that have led me to not have trust in Erin and the C4RJ Board. I have wondered if this is an elephant in the room that is hard to talk about and a source of tension on the RJAC and can slow down and sow distrust in the development of restorative justice in Massachusetts. I am frequently confused about the legislative effort for restorative justice in the state and the role of this committee. Is this committee a rubber stamp for the expansion of C4RJ across the state, or is it for the development of restorative justice and its potential in all its ramifications that I understood Senator Eldridge and Representative Garballey say was the intent of the legislature?

At the last meeting, when I heard Representative Garballey praising Erin for working for restorative justice, for not making it about C4RJ, that it was never about the budget, it was always about supporting the victim, healing the division that is caused by an action—and that's all that it ever was – about the mission of restorative justice, I understood what he said because that is what I thought the legislation was all about for several years— UNTIL around the time one the restorative justice bills passed the House or the Senate and I went to a meeting for facilitators at C4RJ and they were CELEBRATING that they could now expand their program in the state and take cases from the DA's. I WAS SHOCKED! I had heard rumbles that the legislation was about C4RJ and not about restorative justice from people who had dropped away from the legislative effort, but I didn't believe it until that moment. On reflection, I realized that Erin was hired as executive director of C4RJ to do the legislative work needed for their program's expansion. I began to see that the efforts for restorative justice in the state created an advertising platform for C4RJ and for Erin. It was frustrating to hear people saying, "we don't need to know anything about restorative justice, we have C4RJ".

When concerns about the legislation were expressed, Erin said that it doesn't matter what is in the legislation, we just need the legislation, it can be fixed later. When the coalition came to Erin with concerns about confidentiality protections missing for survivors, those impacted, and other participants, Erin said it had to be that way because DA Ryan would not support anything else, and without DA Ryan's support the legislation would not pass. Around the time of the passage of the 2018 legislation, I attended a Boston Bar Association meeting – I think it was co-sponsored by Citizens for Juvenile Justice—an organization that was giving information about young people's growth and development and their needs. C4RJ was there promoting their program. Erin was sick and or home with sick children, so the president of C4RJ's Board was there in her place. She told the audience that what C4RJ does is Family Group Conferencing like they do in New Zealand. This was alarming and misleading because C4RJ is a diversion program and does not do the deeper work of Family Group Conferencing.

When the Questionnaire Subcommittee met, they noticed that many responses to the survey came from police departments connected to C4RJ and a red flag went up. Concern was expressed that doing a survey without clarity about its purpose and how the information would be used could be an impediment to getting responses.

When an earmark for C4RJ without this committee being informed, red flags went up again because of the lack of transparency. The chairperson of the Reporting subcommittee was upset that she'd been asked by a committee member to change the wording in the Annual Report that had been voted on by the full committee. Reflection on this made me realize that I didn't trust Erin and the C4RJ Board because of a lack of transparency, how statistics are reported to look good—such as percentages of cases shown in pie charts without actual numbers to make favorable impressions. Pictures on their website show heavy police presence. This may attract police departments and those in law enforcement, but it will not assure those who live at the margins that this will be a safe experience for them. I don't want what I've said to be interpreted as not being for C4RJ and the work that they do. I've seen important growth in their program and with some of the team leaders and facilitators that have been brought on board, more alignment with the principles and values of restorative justice.

I joined the Coalition in 2014 because of my interest in restorative justice. There I met people who were interested, enthusiastic and wanted to support restorative justice in the state. My Quaker Meeting reached out to other churches to gather support for restorative justice. People did research, including finding out about Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth—RJOY whose co-founder, Fania Davis, later wrote the book *Race and Restorative Justice*. We held a forum with the League of Women Voters. Those who were interested were quite clear that “at the end of the day, it would be a shame if restorative justice just recreated the status quo.” I was taken aback that Erin and C4RJ did not seem to have any understanding of why legislation without confidentiality protections could jeopardize the well-being of those my community was concerned about: communities that are different from the whitest and richest in the state in which C4RJ is embedded—the People who do not have adequate resources to meet their needs, immigrants, Native People or People of Color, kids whose families and communities have experienced violence no human beings should have to endure, and communities that have been decimated by interactions with the criminal justice system and other state systems.

If this committee is a rubber stamp for the expansion of C4RJ across the state AND NOT FOR COMMUNITY AGENCY in developing the kind of restorative justice programs that individual communities want and need that may be different from the C4RJ model; AND NOT FOR THE GROWTH OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE in all of its potential, then I wonder if I've wasted almost a decade of my time and energy and this committee has lost a golden opportunity. This committee has already made strides in a direction that will support the development and growth of restorative justice in the state. I have often wished that communities could have heard the wonderful presentations that have come before this board because communities need to know how restorative justice can make their lives better. I hope this committee will look at the legislation and think carefully about what needs to change to more fully and equitably develop and grow restorative justice in the state. I hope that this committee will reflect on how important transparency is to building trust so it can work together in a good way and develop restorative justice in the state that is worthy of community trust. I have been listening to your hearts for three years now, and I know this is something the committee can do.

Jill- I have been a people pleaser and afraid to speak the truth and use my voice. I can see it in the eyes of the members that the silence and unspoken things are blocking the true progress. I felt I expressed too much hope last meeting. This is a time to use restorative justice to build trust for communities and be a role model and use this resolving of conflict to tell that story. It's from the heart and its truthful. I am supporting the board for unsaid things during meetings.

Ms. Bonds- I agree with Jill the body language and faces not focused or giving their 100 percent attention to the words said. One concern I have is how many board members have gone through restorative justice training themselves and what have you felt. It seems to me that many of you reads the manual on how to drive the car and gets behind the wheel. Restorative justice works I have seen it work firsthand. My community needs healing but unless everyone on the board has training, we cannot walk the good path because of your own immersion into restorative justice. You cannot understand the needs that restorative justice can provide unless you have walked the walk. Has everyone has at least 5 days of training.

Kara Hayes- I have been trained and that is where I have learned through trainers 22 years ago. I have done multiple trainings. I recognized as a victim of violence I have something small to bring. It is a lifelong practice of Restorative Justice. I push for community centered process. We need to lift voices of the community.

Ms. Bonds- Thank you dear. It is life experiences and learned experience that made you part of RJAC. It is obvious that there are people that have not practiced RJ training. We need to get our feet wet, your whole body spirit, and mind. There is a lack of trust and silence so loud. Thank you, Jill, for recognizing the silence. We need experienced and trained practitioners. Please consider your position or go get training.

Senator- I would be happy to get restorative justice training.

Ms. Bonds- Susan and Carolyn are amazing trainers that can help you. Thank you for offering to do the training.

Jill- I wanted to offer a three-day restorative justice training for members to join. It is occurring May 11-13, 2022, by visioning bear.

Noble- Justice in the prisons to train law enforcement. In person training and virtual. It is important to talk through the commonwealth and the prisons. Need to talk about the trauma and crimes committed.

Anjeza- Thank you Noble and Jill. I have included my email in the chat for distribution.

6. Open Session for Topics not Reasonably Anticipated within 48 Hours of the Meeting

N/A

7. Adjourn

Chair Peck- Motion to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 12:05pm